

# Frequently Asked Questions: Save the Old Ranch Road Farm Initiative

## What Farm/Ranch?

The Osguthorpe family is seeking to sell their 158-acre farm located on Old Ranch Road. The ranch is a working farm managed by the Osguthorpe family right in the heart of Snyderville Basin. It is located to the north of Old Ranch Road between the communities of Ranch Place, Old Ranch Road, Mountain Ranch Estates and Willow Creek and the Willow Creek Park.

[Aerial View of the Farm \(Big Green Square in Center of Screen\)](#)

The map above shows the location of the farm which is in the center of Snyderville Basin. The Osguthorpe Ranch is the last major working farm in the Old Ranch Road area.

## Why is preservation of this farm important?

- Summit County is renowned for its natural beauty, quality of life, economic diversity and this property enhances the community and provides one of the last remaining vestiges of the agricultural heritage of the area.
- The Ranch Place community takes its name from the historical ranches in the area, and derives much of its value as a wonderful rural neighborhood because it is nestled between designated open space (Swaner) and the Osguthorpe Ranch working farm.
- Open space and working farms provide all residents of Summit County unique view corridors, mountain vistas, expansive trail systems and parks that enhance quality of life and define the character of our community.
- The residents and leadership of Summit County feel so strongly about the value of open space and the agricultural heritage of the Snyderville Basin that those desires have been codified in a specific Snyderville Basin General Plan (link attached below), and have voted repeatedly to have our tax dollars reserved for the specific purposes of protecting open space in our community. [Link to General Plan](#). The Mission statement of the General Plan is as follows:
  - *Summit County (the "County") hereby establishes the mission of the General Plan ("the Plan") for the Snyderville Basin (the "Basin") as follows: "to preserve natural open space and vistas, prevent suburban sprawl, and promote our mountain resort community" (the "Mission")*

- A potential sale of the Osguthorpe property presents an opportunity to preserve its continued use as a farm, in perpetuity, as a reminder of the agricultural heritage of Summit County and is consistent with our County's stated and published Mission, Vision and Values that includes Preservation:
  - Value # 2 - Preservation
    - *Preserve our land, water, culture and agricultural heritage*
- If the land is not preserved, the Osguthorpe family has stated that it will sell the farm. The most likely outcome in the case of a sale is new development of homes, roads and additional neighborhood infrastructure that will create further congestion in the area, and cause us to lose the last heritage ranch in Snyderville Basin forever.
- We have all seen the impact of aggressive development in the area, including traffic jams along State Road 224, reduced open space, crowded townhome developments, etc. Our community in the Old Ranch Road/Snyderville Basin area provides one of the last refuges from that crowding and is the reason many of us have chosen to live in this area. The Summit County Board of County Commissioners created the (Snyderville) Basin Open Space Advisory Committee (BOSAC) and Summit County voters provided tax-dollar funding to acquire property to preserve and protect the rural character of the Snyderville Basin. There is no more obvious or worthy open space to protect, in the heart of the Snyderville Basin, than the Osguthorpe Farm.

### **OK, so what is going on?**

There has been a lot of excitement and news about this farm over the last few months. The Summit Land Conservancy (SLC) has been working for some time to save the farm. In September, the SLC brokered a deal that would save the Osguthorpe farm forever.

You may have read about this transaction in the story below.

[Park Record article of September 8, 2017](#)

### **Who are the parties to the transaction?**

The seller of the farm is the Osguthorpe family. They are one of the largest landowners in the Park City area and have a long history of working with the community to preserve lands.

The organizer of the agreement to preserve the farm is Cheryl Fox from Summit Land Conservancy (SLC). SLC has secured the Federal Grant and are working to

raise the needed funds to finance the remainder of the purchase. Their website is [here](#). Their site for the Osguthorpe Ranch project is [here](#).

The Summit County Council represents Summit County and is in charge of approving the use of BOSAC funds for land preservation and saving Open Space. Their most recent Vision, Mission and Values are here: [Summit County Values Statement](#).

## **What is BOSAC?**

The Summit County Board of County Commissioners established the Snyderville Basin Open Space Advisory Committee (BOSAC) in 2003 and appointed members to advise the County Commission on open space planning and purchases in the Snyderville Basin. BOSAC's goal is to achieve preservation of important open spaces while protecting property rights. Passive recreational open space checks growth and sprawl, supports wildlife habitat, provides non-motorized recreational opportunities, like hiking and biking and limits the need for expansion of public services.

To this end, utilizing the Recreation District as the local taxing authority, voters in the Snyderville Basin approved a \$25 million general obligation recreational open space bond in 2014, of which \$15M is allocated to preserving open space like the Osguthorpe Farm. \$13M is still available in this fund. This is the entity that holds our tax dollars that are earmarked to preserve important open spaces. Their information is here: [Link](#)

## **What's the Deal?**

The transaction that was proposed would acquire a "conservation easement" on the farm. This easement would prohibit using the land for housing development and provide the Osguthorpes with the ability to continue to operate the working farm as it is today. In effect, the agreement would allow the Osguthorpes to realize some of the value of the land today, without having to sell it to developers.

## **Who pays for that easement?**

The Summit Land Conservancy has worked incredibly hard and has secured Federal Funding for \$8.7M toward the purchase price of the property. They have also secured a contribution from the Osguthorpes towards the transaction in the form of a discount against the appraised value of the land. The SLC had planned for the remainder of the purchase to come from Summit County (via the BOSAC funds) and from privately donated funds that they are committed to raising from folks like us.

**What is the appraised value of the property?**

The appraised value of the property is \$20 million.

**What is the purchase price of the easement?**

The purchase price of the easement is \$17.7 million.

**Where will the money come from to pay for the purchase of the easement?**

<u>Sources of Funds</u>		<u>Uses of the Funds</u>	
<i>Osguthorpe Family Contribution (non-cash/discount)</i>	\$3,450,000	<i>Appraised Value of the Farm</i>	\$20,000,000
<i>Federal Land Grant</i>	\$8,700,000	<i>Discount for Conservation Easement</i>	(\$2,300,000)
<i>Summit County (BOSAC Tax \$)</i>	\$4,000,000		
<i>Summit Land Conservancy (Donations)</i>	\$1,550,000		
<i>Total Funds Needed</i>	\$17,700,000	<i>Purchase Price of the Farm</i>	\$17,700,000

This reduces the money needed from Summit County/BOSAC to just \$4 million.

**Does Summit County have money set aside for preservation of agricultural land such as this?**

Yes, they do. We have contributed our tax dollars to BOSAC which was created specifically to fund this type of project. Today there are \$13M of our tax dollars in this fund that are available to be spent to preserve open space like the Osguthorpe Ranch. This agreement would require the use of \$4M of those funds. Here is a link to the criteria for usage of those funds: [Link](#)

**Great! So what is all the fuss about? Why isn't this a done deal?**

Well... All transactions like this are complicated, and this transaction despite its incredible benefits, and external funding has run into a few challenges. Specifically, the Summit County Council has asked for several additional concessions as part of the deal. See the article below on this debate.

[Park Record article of October 3, 2017](#)

**What is their position? What are they asking for?**

The Council states that they are supportive of the transaction, but want to get recreational amenities on the land, in addition to the benefits of its preservation. Specifically, the Council has requested that a 30-foot recreational easement be added on the north and east sides of the farm, and an 85-foot easement be added

on the south. The Council's plan for these easements is to put recreational trails on each of these sides that would connect into the Willow Creek trail system to the west, and eventually continue to the Round Valley trailhead to the east. The County is also pursuing separate options to make the final connections on the east side along Old Ranch Road. The additional easement on the southern side is to allow for a bike lane along Old Ranch Road and moving of the drainage canal that currently has flooding issues during the Spring, in addition to the recreational trail. The Council has also requested winter access to the farm for cross country skiing across the entire property, in addition to the requested trails around its perimeter.

The Council has also included as a condition of their expenditure of the BOSAC funds a number of other concessions and requirements from the Osguthorpes related to their other land holdings along State Road 224 and in the Canyons development district. These include additional granting of easements and acceleration of payments related to other existing lands, contracts and developments.

### **What was the response?**

The SLC and the Osguthorpes have countered with an offer of a 10-foot easement on all sides of the property to allow for small dirt trails, and do not want to tie this transaction to any other matters at the Canyons or otherwise.

### **Why are we at an impasse?**

Rather than meeting and constructively working to reach a compromise, both sides have now dug in their heels and are at an impasse.

The SLC's position is that the request from the County will eliminate too much of their federal grant dollars (the grant is based on the amount of acreage preserved) and that the request for other unrelated concessions, payments and granting of easements unnecessarily puts this transaction in jeopardy by alienating the Osguthorpes, who are generously contributing the \$3.4 million discount towards the project.

The County Council's position is that they are working to get the maximum value for the BOSAC funds, and feel that contributing \$4M to the deal without getting the requested trail access permanently eliminates the ability to connect trails to Round Valley and provide much-needed safety to the Old Ranch Road corridor. They have also expressed that the items requested regarding the other Osguthorpe lands in the Canyons and along SR-224 are already mandated by the Canyons Development Agreement and are consistent with previous conversations between the landowner and the County. While the Council has stated that they are supportive of the transaction and want to find a way to negotiate in good faith, they have also stated that their first offer is their "Best and Final," or effectively their only offer, and have not been willing to negotiate in an attempt to find a mutually beneficial compromise, according to the SLC. The latest story on this saga is here:

[Park Record article of October 29, 2017](#)

## **What is the position of our HOA Board?**

The board has engaged in active outreach to the Ranch Place community over the last several months and at the two recent Annual HOA meetings. We have heard consistent and enthusiastic support for preserving the farm through this transaction and frustration and confusion regarding why the transaction is delayed and/or in jeopardy. That is the reason that we have created this FAQ document based on the facts as we know them today.

We are closely monitoring the situation and are frustrated with the lack of progress. We are very concerned that the County Council is not aligned with the Ranch Place community and SLC regarding the prevention of development of the Osguthorpe Farm. We believe that they are playing hardball due to an expectation that they can gain trail and other recreational concessions from a developer who buys the land from the Osguthorpes for development purposes. Even more concerning is that such a “play” could result in the County granting additional zoning density to a developer of the land in exchange for such trail and recreation concessions. This would potentially result in many more homes crowding our view corridors and open space than is currently zoned for today. We strongly oppose such development consideration, and strongly disagree with any notion that the Council may have that this “wouldn’t be too bad” for our community.

We have been engaging with both the SLC and Summit County Council and have met with both groups to urge them to continue to negotiate in good faith to find a mutually beneficial solution.

We have also begun to explore options that would allow for the grant of an easement on the southern border of our property that would allow for the parties to achieve their trail and conservation goals with less farm land being impacted. We have not yet gotten feedback whether such a grant would help break the logjam.

## **What can we do to help?**

### **1. Donate to Summit Land Conservancy to help fund the transaction**

The SLC is working hard to raise between \$1.5M and \$5.5M of private donations to fund the transaction (depending on how much the County Council contributes, if any). We need all the funds we can get to save the farm! Please, please, please!!!! Donate here: [Link](#)

### **2. Write letters to the Summit County Council**

This is the time that our voices need to be heard! When we rallied the community in October, your letters and notes had a huge impact. The Council sent out a response at that time, saying that they were for the deal

and negotiating in good faith to close the deal. Since then, nothing has happened. We need to remind them that this is important to us! Important notes for your letters:

- Please be respectful, the County Council is working hard trying to meet the needs of the County
- Let them know how important saving the farm is to us as residents of Snyderville Basin
- Let them know why you want the farm saved
- Urge the Council to work with the Osguthorpes to find a mutually agreeable compromise that will save the farm and prevent the land from being lost to development forever

Letters to the Summit County Council can be sent to:

[countycouncil@summitcounty.org](mailto:countycouncil@summitcounty.org)

Or you can email or call a Council Member directly, there contact info is listed here: [Link](#)

### **3. Write a letter to the Editor of the Park Record**

Same points as above

### **4. Help us organize Ranch Place to save the Farm!**

We are creating a committee to organize our efforts and could use your help. This is a great way to stay up to date on what is going on and help save the farm and our wonderful community landscape! If you would like to help, or even if you would just like to get updates, send an email to:

[Ranchplacehoapc@gmail.com](mailto:Ranchplacehoapc@gmail.com) expressing your interest and we will get you on the distribution list for the latest updates and how you can help!